

Dr. Surin Pitsuwan: Biography



Dr. Surin Pitsuwan is an accomplished scholar, diplomat, journalist and politician who began his term as Secretary-General of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on January 1, 2008. He has a well-deserved positive reputation for his active and engaged leadership of the organization.

Dr. Surin is an experienced diplomat and politician having served in several key positions in the Thai government after first being elected Member of Parliament in 1986, including Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Assistant Secretary to the Minister of the Interior and Secretary to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He is a member of the Board of Directors of The Asia Foundation as well as being a member of the Commission on Human Security, a member of the Advisory Board of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, and a member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation. He previously served as Chairman of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Beyond his political career, Dr. Surin wrote for two daily English language newspapers in Bangkok and taught at Bangkok's Thammasart University where he became Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. He taught at American University in Washington, D.C. and has worked in the U.S. Congress as a Congressional Fellow and at the American Political Science Association (APSA). He has held positions at the Thai Studies Institute, the Ford Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Harvard University, and the American University, Cairo.

Dr. Surin studied at Thammasart University in Bangkok, graduated from Claremont McKenna College in California and received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University.

ASEAN-Canada Relations: Celebrating 35 Years

ASEAN is home to nearly 600 million people and is one of the world's fastest-growing regions and boasts an increasingly youthful and educated middle-class consumer base. Collectively, the economies of the ten countries in the ASEAN are approximately 10% larger than that of Canada and just slightly smaller than that of Brazil. ASEAN's members include: Brunei Darussalam, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.



Canada and the ASEAN region share a substantial and growing trade relationship. In 2010 ASEAN ranked as Canada's 7th largest trading partner in terms of bilateral merchandise trade, worth approximately \$13.8 billion dollars, an increase of 26% since 2005. Stock of Canadian direct investment abroad (CDIA) in Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines reached \$7.9 billion in 2010, an increase of over 18% from the previous year. This figure exceeds stocks of CDIA held in either China or India for the same year.

Canada also has strong people-to-people links with ASEAN as approximately 1 million immigrants from ASEAN now calling Canada home.

Canada became a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 1977. A ceremony to launch the 35th anniversary of ASEAN-Canada relations was held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia, on January 20 this year. At that reception Dr. Surin stated: "Canada has been a steadfast friend of ASEAN and we look forward to an even closer partnership in the future. Our peoples will benefit from our dedication to the issues of energy, environment and inequality so I am happy to note the positive developments in our dialogue partnership on these fronts."